

REMARKS

In the Official Action mailed on **21 December 2006**, the Examiner reviewed claims 1-4, 6-14, and 16-21. Claims 6 and 16 were objected to because of informalities. Claims 1, 11 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruner et al. (USPN 4,731,734 hereinafter “Gruner”), in view of Beckert et al. (USPN 6,801,994 hereinafter “Beckert”). Claims 4, 7-9 and 17-19 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim.

Claim Objections

Claims 6 and 16 were objected to for lacking proper antecedent basis. Applicant has amended claims 6 and 16 to provide proper antecedent basis.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 4, 7-9, 14, and 17-19 were objected to for being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. (It appears that Examiner inadvertently omitted claim 14 as allowable subject matter.)

Applicant has rewritten claims 4 and 14 in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims. Applicant has also amended independent claim 21 to include allowable subject matter. No new matter has been added. Dependent claims 4 and 14 have been cancelled without prejudice.

Hence, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 11, and 21 as presently amended are in condition for allowance. Applicant also submits that claims 2-3, and 6-10, which depend upon claim 1, and claims 12-13, and 16-20, which depend upon claim 11, are for the same reasons in condition for allowance and for reasons of the unique combinations recited in such claims.

CONCLUSION

It is submitted that the present application is presently in form for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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